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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRASILIA 001262

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SUBJECT: BRAZIL STILL LACKS A STRATEGY IN HONDURAS  
FOLLOWING ITS CONGRESSIONAL VISIT

REF: BRASILIA 01210

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Classified By: Political Counselor Steve Liston, reason: 1.4 (b) and (d)  
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¶1. (C) Summary: A six-member Brazilian Congressional delegation traveled to Tegucigalpa September 30 to October 2 to support the Brazilian community in Honduras and met with Zelaya and Micheletti government officials. According to two members of the delegation, Zelaya appeared to be "fragile" and perhaps not completely lucid. Only four members of the delegation met with Micheletti, who affirmed that there had been no coup against Zelaya and all of the government's repressive measures were taken to protect the population. In meetings with PolOffs in Brasilia and Recife this month the delegation was unable to define a strategy or provide recommendations for Brazil to help diffuse the Honduras crisis, which parallels the lack of planning and vision seen in the Lula administration and Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) on the issue (Reftel). At the broadest level, this reflects the fact that Brazil is in the unaccustomed position of being at the center of a crisis outside its historical sphere of influence. End summary.

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BRAZIL CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION VISITS HONDURAS  
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¶2. (C) Six Brazilian Chamber of Deputies (equivalent to United States House of Representatives) members traveled to Honduras September 30 to October 2 to visit the Brazilian Embassy and met with Zelaya and Micheletti government officials. The delegation included four opposition members--Raul Jungmann (PPS-PE), Bruno Araujo (PSDB-PE), Ivan Valente (PSOL-SP), and Marcondes Gadelha (PSB-PB)--and two members of the ruling party, Janeta Pieta Rocha (PT-SP) and Mauricio Rands (PT-PE)--all of whom serve in the Foreign Affairs Committee (CREDN) in the Chamber of Deputies. In meetings with Recife PolOffs and Brasilia Poloffs Congress members emphasized that the main goal of their trip was to support the Brazilian community in Honduras and convey to the Micheletti government that Honduras must respect the Brazilian Embassy and staff. Rocha and Jungmann said there are approximately 600 Brazilians living in Honduras.

¶3. (C) The GOB did not fully support the delegation's mission. Jungmann said that the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) did not like the idea of having members of Congress dealing with a diplomatic issue. Jungmann explained that the MRE tried to block their trip and even the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Michel Temer, heavily lobbied the delegation not to travel. According to both Jungmann and

Rocha, they all had to pay their own way from El Salvador to Tegucigalpa, otherwise they would not have been able to make the trip.

¶ 14. (C) Rocha described the situation in Honduras as worrisome. She was concerned with the level of repression exerted by the government because Micheletti was "ruling with a firm hand." There was a curfew being enforced and the media was being censored, she said, in addition to the harassing measures Rocha said the Micheletti government and security forces were employing against the Brazilian Embassy.

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MEETINGS WITH ZELAYA AND MICHELETTI  
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¶ 15. (C) Both Jungmann and Rocha recounted their meetings in Honduras in general terms. Jungmann said the delegation first met with the Honduran Supreme Court, which told the Brazilians that Zelaya's removal from power was Constitutional. The delegation was successful in visiting the Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa and was well received. According to Jungmann, the Embassy's employees were very grateful and felt that the GOB had not abandoned them. There are currently only three Brazilian employees at the Embassy, and only one is a diplomat. Rocha expressed her appreciation for the United States Embassy's assistance to the Brazilian Embassy in Honduras, which included their role in negotiations with the Micheletti government and food deliveries.

¶ 16. (C) The delegation also met with the Honduran National Assembly and opened a dialog between legislatures in Brazil and Honduras, according to Rocha, who said "we as parliamentarians can demand a certain parliamentary diplomacy." Rocha said they made it clear to the Honduran

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Congress that Brazil did not expect or plan Zelaya's return to Honduras and refuge in the Brazilian Embassy. But, because of Brazil's negative experience with a military dictatorship, in which so many Brazilian lives were saved when other countries gave them refugee, Brazil could not have turned down Zelaya. Rocha added that the meeting was interesting since many of the Honduran members of Congress were involved with the ousting of Zelaya. The Honduran members conveyed to the Brazilians their belief that Brazil and Venezuela had partnering roles and positions on Zelaya's return, and the Brazilian delegation worked hard to explain otherwise, Rocha said.

¶ 17. (C) Regarding their meeting with Zelaya, Rocha said he was "fragile" but holding up well. Jungmann said the meeting was interesting but that Zelaya may not be completely lucid. Rocha explained that the Micheletti government was employing a lot of "psychological interference" against Zelaya, which she listed as light and sound interference and the constant presence of snipers around the Brazilian Embassy. Rocha said Zelaya thanked the Brazilian delegation for their visit and thanked Brazilian President Lula for his support. Zelaya told the Brazilians all he wants is an electoral process without interruptions before the November election and to step down from office in January.

¶ 18. (C) Rocha and Rands did not attend the meeting with Micheletti. Rocha said it was not a difficult decision for her to miss the meeting because she ideologically could not meet with a "golpista" (coup-maker) and the Micheletti appointment was the last on their schedule. Jungmann said that in the meeting, Micheletti tried to explain that there had been no coup, that every process had been respected and done in line with the Honduran constitution, with the exception of how the military removed Zelaya from office. Micheletti told Jungmann it was the Honduran military that saw the need to remove Zelaya from the country to prevent a civil war. Micheletti also mentioned that martial law was

implemented to protect the population, and avoid serious confrontations. Micheletti told Jungmann that the military is not controlling the private sector or government institutions, which is a common occurrence following a true military coup.

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MUDDLED GOB MESSAGE AND POLICY  
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¶ 9. (C) Jungmann and Rocha viewed the trip as a success but, while the delegation was united in its primary goal--to support the Brazilian community and Embassy in Honduras--they appeared factionalized in their intention and views for the rest of the trip. Jungmann said the delegation did not speak as one voice and as the leader of the group there were some uncomfortable moments when he had to manage different political views. But, Jungmann said, that was to be expected since he put together a delegation with members from different parties. Jungmann said he is working on a trip report to be presented to the Chamber's Foreign Affairs Committee, but did not say when it would be completed.

¶ 10. (C) Both Jungmann and Rocha reiterated that they believe Brazil was correct in allowing Zelaya to enter their Embassy and that the GOB did not have any prior knowledge or warning of Zelaya's return to Honduras. Jungmann, however, made it a point to say that Brazil should have prevented Zelaya from using the Embassy as a pulpit to stir up his supporters and cause problems in Honduras. Jungmann recounted that the most delicate and embarrassing moment of the trip was when the delegation was shown a DVD with images of protestors holding banners saying, "Brazil and Venezuela have violated Honduras, sovereignty," images that had been broadcast throughout the country many times. Jungmann went so far as to say that Brazil should apologize to Honduras, an idea he said was completely rejected by other members in the delegation, the MRE, and other members of the Chamber of Deputies Foreign Relations Committee. He said, "I knew my proposal would not be accepted, but one has to express what he or she thinks." He said, "the Brazilian government acted correctly when it decided to host Zelaya, but our diplomacy made a serious mistake in allowing him to interact with the population via our Embassy."

¶ 11. (C) Although she did not define a position and plan for Brazil in the crisis, Rocha expressed the need for the United States to provide greater clarity on its position on the situation, asserting that the U.S. Congress is evidently divided over the issue. Rocha added that she hopes that the

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international community exerts greater voice in the Honduran crisis because Latin America has seen these types of standstills erode the progress made to protect civil rights in the region.

¶ 12. (C) COMMENT: The congressional delegation's somewhat chaotic and inconclusive visit to Honduras mirrors the GOB's muddled policy toward the crisis in Honduras (Reftel). The matter was further complicated by the differing views within the delegation and confusion over which players in Honduras to engage. More than anything, the lack of decisive Brazilian action on the issue and the heated public debate on Brazil's role (Sao Paulo septel) reflect the fact that Brazil finds itself in an unaccustomed and uncomfortable position, at the political center and in the public spotlight of a crisis outside its historical sphere of influence. End Comment.

¶ 13. (U) This Cable was coordinated with Consulate Recife.  
KUBISKE